GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2517
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2005
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIV POSITIVE AND AIDS
Kaushal Shri Raghuvir Singh

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a difference between being HIV positive and having AIDS and that an HIV positive patient is not necessarily an AIDS patient;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has maintained any record of such persons who are not suffering from AIDS despite testing positive for HIV ;

(d) if so, the details thereof ;

(e) whether the patients suffering from diseases like Chronic Malaria , Kala-Azar etc also test positive for HIV ;

(f) whether the Government proposes to take steps to remove the confusion regarding AIDS and being HIV positive ;and

(g) if so, the steps taken /proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. There is a difference between HIV positive and AIDS case and HIV positive person may not necessarily be an AIDS patient. As per the natural history of the disease, once an individual is infected with HIV virus, he remains asymptomatic for initial 5-6 years. During this period, he remains healthy and may not be present with any symptoms. Subsequently, when his immune system is destroyed by the virus by killing CD4 cells, he becomes prey to various opportunistic infections, the most common being Tuberculosis. The presence of such opportunistic infections in an HIV positive person marks the beginning of AIDS.

(c) & (d) As per the universal reporting system laid down under the National AIDS Control Programme, any individual can access HIV testing facility through voluntary counseling and Testing Centres located in hospitals in the country. These centers maintain records with confidentiality of the HIV status of the individual to ensure follow up of these cases. While in other forms of testing, since the testing protocol is `Unlinked Anonymous`, it is not possible to maintain such records.

(e) No, Sir. The presence of HIV anti-bodies in the serum of an individual detected by HIV antibody test in HIV infected persons is the gold standard for test being positive for HIV. Under no circumstances, such tests can be found positive in diseases like Chronic Malaria, Kala-azar etc.

(f) & (g) No, Sir. There is no confusion regarding HIV positive and AIDS case as there is a standard case definition laid down under the National AIDS Control Programme for AIDS cases.